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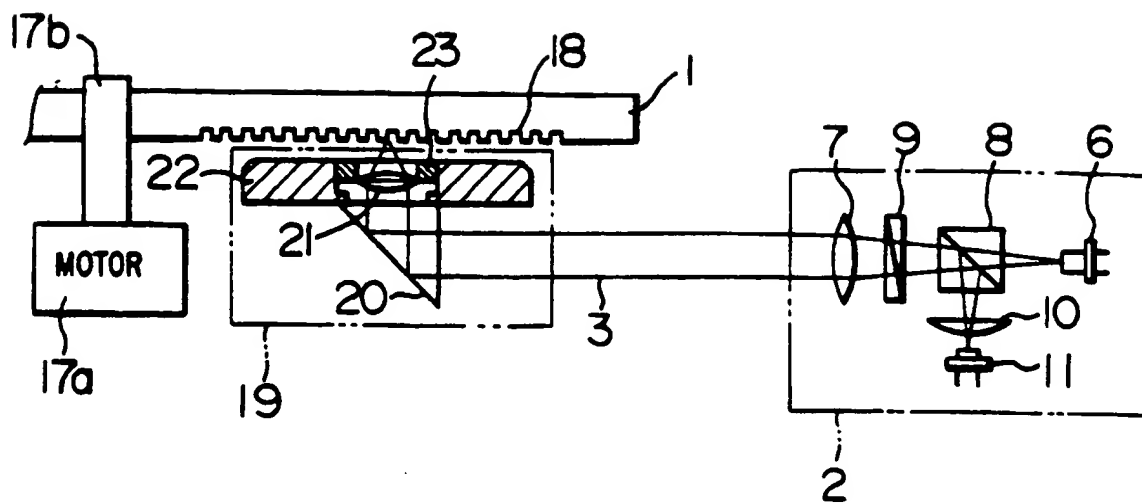
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London WC1A 2RA(GB)**(54) **Flying optical head and optical information recording and reproducing apparatus.**

(57) Disclosed is an optical head of small size and light weight flying to float relative to a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1), thereby recording and reproducing an information signal on and from the signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of the optical disk (1) with a high density by focusing a laser beam by using an objective lens (21, 31) having a large numerical aperture NA. Disclosed also is an optical information recording and reproducing apparatus using the optical head for information signal recording and reproduction. The optical head comprises a fixed optical part (2) including a laser beam source (6), a collimation lens (7), a reflected beam splitter (8) and a photo detector (11), a moving optical part (19) including a beam reflector (20), an objective lens (21, 31) and a slider (22) mounting the beam reflector (20) and the objective lens (21) thereon and flying to float the objective lens relative to a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1), and an actuating element (23, 32, 28, 35) mounted on either the objective lens (21, 31) or the collimation lens (7), or an actuating element (26) for

driving a flexure (24) connecting the slider (22) to a linear motor (25), or a lens part (40) for changing the position of the beam emission point of the laser beam source (6). The slider (22) mounting the objective lens (21, 31) thereon flies to float the objective lens (21, 31) relative to the signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of the optical disk (1) through a gaseous layer, and fluctuation of the flying height of the slider (22) is limited to a value smaller than about several  $\mu\text{m}$  substantially independently of vertical runout of the signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of the optical disk (1), so that the movable distance of the objective lens (21, 31) required for the focus control can be minimized. Therefore, the laser beam can be focused into a diffraction-limited beam spot by using the objective lens (21, 31) having a large numerical aperture NA, so that the optical head of the small size and light weight can detect a substantially offsetless servo error signal. Thus, a large-capacity memory device having a stacked structure permitting high-speed track access can be provided.

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F I G. 1



## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### Field of the Invention

This invention relates to an optical head for recording and reproducing information on and from an optical disk and relates also to an optical information recording and reproducing apparatus. More particularly, this invention relates to a flying optical head recording and reproducing an information signal with a laser beam on and from an optical disk while flying on the optical disk, and relates also to an optical recording and reproducing apparatus using such an optical head for the information signal recording and reproduction.

### Description of the Related Art

An optical recording and reproducing apparatus using an optical disk as a recording medium is advantageout in the aspect of recording density over a magnetic recording and reproducing apparatus. However, the former is not still sufficient in the aspect of access speed as compared with that of the latter. This is attributable to the difference between the mass of the optical and magnetic recording and reproducing heads used for recording and reproducing a signal. That is, the optical head is large in size heavy in weight, whereas the magnetic head is very small in size and light in weight. An optical head of a split-type has been proposed so as to solve the above problem. Also, when an optical disk is compared with a magnetic recording medium such as a magnetic disk in view of the surface recording density, the surface recording density of the optical disk, because of its superiority in track density, is about several to ten times as high as that of the magnetic disk. However, when both are compared with each other from the viewpoint of drive units, their memory capacities are almost in the same level. This is because the magnetic head is very small in size, and a stacked structure can be easily obtained by stacking a plurality of magnetic disks. Therefore, in order to increase the memory capacity of the optical disk, it is important to attain an improvement in the surface recording density of the optical disk and a reduction in the size of the optical head so as to achieve the desired stacking of a plurality of optical disks.

The surface recording density  $D$  of an optical disk on which information is recorded with a laser beam is expressed as  $D \propto (NA/\lambda)^2$ , where  $\lambda$  is the wavelength of the laser beam and  $NA$  is the nu-

merical aperture of an objective lens. Therefore, the desired increase in the surface recording density  $D$  is attained by two ways of approach, that is, shortening the wavelength  $\lambda$  of the laser beam and increasing the numerical aperture  $NA$  of the objective lens.

Shortening the wavelength  $\lambda$  of the laser beam is dependent on the progress of the semiconductor laser diode technology. At present, urgent development of a semiconductor laser diode capable of emitting a laser beam having a wavelength of 670 nm is demanded. As for crystalline materials capable of emitting a laser beam having a wavelength shorter than 670 nm, practically usable materials have not been found yet, and it is the present status that the above demand is dealt with by increasing the numerical aperture  $NA$  of the objective lens.

However, in the case of the optical disk structure where the laser beam is directed to irradiate the recording layer through the disk substrate thereby recording and reproducing a signal on and from the optical disk, the objective lens has a long working distance  $WD$ , and the increase in the numerical aperture  $NA$  of the objective lens leads directly to a large size of the objective lens, resulting in impossibility of attaining the desired reduction in the size of the optical head. Also, because the amount of vertical runout of the optical disk is commonly about 100  $\mu\text{m}$ , and a lens actuator having a wide movable range is required for actuating the objective lens, these factors have obstructed the desired reduction in the size of the optical head.

A prior art optical head is disclosed in, for example, JP-A-64-35734 (1989).

Fig. 12 shows the structure of this prior art optical head. Referring to Fig. 12, the optical head comprises a fixed optical part 2 for emitting a collimated laser beam 3 and a moving optical part 4 for condensing the collimated laser beam 3 on a track 5 of an optical disk 1 thereby recording and reproducing a signal on and from the track 5 of the optical disk 1. The fixed optical part 2 includes a laser 6, a collimation lens 7 which collimates a laser beam emitted from the laser 6, thereby providing the collimated laser beam 3, a polarized beam splitter 8 which, without returning the reflected laser beam from the optical disk 1 toward the laser 6, directs the reflected laser beam toward a photo detector 11 which detects the servo signal and the reproduced signal when it receives the reflected laser beam from the optical disk 1, a quarter wave plate 9, a cylindrical lens 10 for causing astigmatism, and an actuator 12 which

actuates the collimation lens 7 for focusing and tracking purposes. The moving optical part 4 includes a total reflection mirror 13, an objective lens 14 which focuses the collimated laser beam 3 on the track 5 of the optical disk 1, and a linear motor 15. A guide rail 16 guides the moving optical part 4.

The operation of the prior art optical head having the structure described above will now be described with reference to Fig. 12. Referring to Fig. 12, the optical head is divided into the fixed optical part 2 and the moving optical part 4, and the moving optical part 4 is moved by the linear motor 15 along the guide rail 16 in the radial direction of the optical disk 1 under rotation. The laser beam emitted from the laser 6 is collimated by the collimation lens 7, and the collimated laser beam 3 is reflected by the total reflection mirror 13. The laser beam 3 reflected by the mirror 13 is focused by the objective lens 14 to be incident in substantially perpendicular relation on the track 5 of the optical disk 1. The reflected beam from the optical disk 1 is substantially totally reflected by the polarized beam splitter 8 by the function of the quarter wave plate 9, and the reflected beam from the beam splitter 8 passes through the cylindrical lens 10 to be incident on the photo detector 11. By utilizing the astigmatism caused by the cylindrical lens 10, the photo detector 11 detects a focusing error signal. The photo detector 11 also detects a tracking error signal by the far-field push-pull method. Even when out-of-focus of the objective lens 14 is caused by vertical runout of the optical disk 1, the objective lens 14 is placed in its just-focus position by actuating the collimation lens 7 by the actuator 12. Upon making intensity-modulation of the laser 6 at a recording power level thereof by using a data signal to be recorded, data is recorded on the corresponding track 5 of the optical disk 1.

However, in the prior art optical head operating in the manner described above, the actuator 12 is required to move the collimation lens 7 in the fixed optical part 2 by an amount almost equal to the amount of the vertical runout of the optical disk 1. Thus, the actuator 12 of a large size capable of producing large actuating power is required. Further, when the collimation lens 7 is actuated by such an actuator 12 to move over a large distance, the collimated beam 3 is caused to have a correspondingly large diverging or converging angle. In such a case, the collimated beam 3 incident on the objective lens 13 will not be a true parallel beam and may not be satisfactorily sharp focused, and, also the reflected beam from the optical disk 1 will be incident on the photo detector 11 at a deviated position. As a result, the prior art optical head has had the problem that the focusing error

signal inevitably includes an offset which makes it difficult to assure satisfactory servo accuracy.

Further, in the prior art optical head, its moving optical part 4 is mounted on the guide rail 16 and guided along the rail 16 so as to seek the track 5. Therefore, when the factors including vertical runout of the optical disk 1 are taken into account, a relatively large working distance WD is required for the objective lens 14, and, because of such a requirement, the diameter of the objective lens 14 cannot be decreased. Thus, the prior art optical head has had such another problem that the use of the objective lens 14 having a large numerical aperture NA results inevitably in a large size of the moving optical part 4.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

With a view to solving the prior art problems pointed out above, it is an object of the present invention to provide an optical head which is small in size and light in weight, which includes an objective lens having a large numerical aperture NA and which is capable of high-density information recording and reproduction.

an optical head according to a first aspect of the present invention comprises a fixed optical part including a source of a laser beam, laser beam condensing means including a collimation lens for collimating the laser beam emitted from the laser beam source, beam splitting means for splitting the laser beam reflected from a signal recording and reproducing surface (hereinafter referred to simply as a recording and reproducing surface) of an optical disk, and beam detecting means for receiving and detecting the split reflected laser beam, a moving optical part including beam reflecting means for reflecting the collimated beam toward the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk in a direction substantially perpendicular with respect to the recording and reproducing surface, an objective lens for focusing the reflected beam from the beam reflecting means on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk, and a slider carrying both the objective lens and the beam reflecting means and adapted to fly on or relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk, and an actuating element attached to the objective lens or the collimation lens or an actuating element actuating a lever connecting the slider to slider transferring feeding means.

An optical head according to a second aspect of the present invention comprises an optical fiber for transmitting a laser beam emitted from a fixed optical part toward a moving optical part, and beam focusing means which is formed by working the terminating end of the optical fiber to have a

spherical lens surface, or which utilizes the lens function of a self-focusing optical fiber. The optical head further comprises an actuating element for driving the beam converging means or the beam focusing means in the direction of the optical axis.

an optical recording and reproducing apparatus according to a third aspect of the present invention comprises beam emission point position adjusting means for adjusting the position of the beam emission point of a laser beam source, beam converging means for collimating the laser beam emitted from the laser beam source, beam focusing means for focusing the collimated laser beam on a recording and reproducing surface of an optical disk, beam splitting means for splitting the reflected beam from the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk, beam detecting means for receiving and detecting the reflected beam split by the beam splitting means, and a slider flying to float the beam focusing means relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk.

In the optical head according to the first aspect of the present invention, both the objective lens and the beam reflecting means are floated by the flying slider relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk through a gaseous layer so as to just focus the laser beam on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk. At the same time, any fluctuation of flying height of the slider due to the difference in peripheral speeds between radially different positions on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk is compensated by moving the objective lens or the collimation lens in the direction of the optical axis by the actuating element until the laser beam is just focused by the objective lens on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk.

In the optical head according to the second aspect of the present invention, the laser beam emitted from the laser beam source is transmitted through the optical fiber to the beam focusing means, and both the optical fiber and the beam focusing means are floated by the flying slider relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk through a gaseous layer, so that the laser beam is just focused by the floated beam focusing means on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk thereby recording and reproducing a signal.

In the optical recording and reproducing apparatus according to the third aspect of the present invention, the slider mounting the beam focusing means thereon is made to fly thereby to float the beam focusing means relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk, and the position of the beam emission point of the laser beam source is adjusted by the beam emission

position adjusting means, so that the laser beam is just focused by the beam focusing means on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk, thereby recording and reproducing a signal.

Thus, according to the first aspect of the present invention, the slider mounting the objective lens thereon is made to fly thereby to float the objective lens relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk through a gaseous layer, and fluctuation of the flying height of the slider is limited to a value smaller than about several  $\mu\text{m}$  substantially independently of vertical runout of the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk, so that the required movable distance of the objective lens for the focus control purpose can be minimized. Therefore, the laser beam can be focused into a tiny beam spot by the objective lens having the large numerical aperture NA, so that an optical head of small size and light weight can be realized which detects a substantially offset-free servo error signal. Thus, a remarkable practical effect is obtained in that high speed track access is made possible and a large-capacity memory device of a stacked structure having a plurality of recording and reproducing surfaces stacked one on another can be realized.

Further, according to the second aspect of the present invention, the laser beam is transmitted by the optical fiber to the beam focusing means which is mounted on the slider and is made thereby to fly by the slider relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk. Therefore, the optical head requires a reduced number of optical parts, is made small in size and light in weight and has a high degree of freedom of design because of the light weight and flexibility of the optical fiber.

Further, according to the third aspect of the present invention, the position of the beam emission point of the laser beam source is adjusted so that the laser beam can be just focused on the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk by the beam focusing means floating relative to the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk. Therefore, the optical head, which is small in size and light in weight and has not any moving parts, can be incorporated in the optical recording and reproducing apparatus. Thus, high speed track access is made possible and a large-capacity memory device can be realized by employing a stacked structure having a plurality of signal recording and reproducing surfaces stacked one on another.

Thus, again it is made possible to obtain a remarkable practical effect.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a diagrammatic view showing the structure of a first embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention.

Figs. 2A, 2B and 2C illustrate the focusing correcting operation of the optical head shown in Fig. 1.

Figs. 3A and 3B are diagrammatic views showing the structure of another embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention.

Fig. 4 is a diagrammatic view showing the structure of still another embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention.

Fig. 5 is a diagrammatic view showing the structure of yet another embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention.

Figs. 6A and 6B show two types of objective lens each thereof being formed by applying an optical fiber to the optical head shown in Fig. 5.

Fig. 7 is a diagrammatic view showing the structure of a further embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention.

Fig. 8 is a diagrammatic view showing the structure of an embodiment of the optical recording and reproducing apparatus according to the present invention.

Fig. 9 shows one form of the laser beam source preferably used in the apparatus shown in Fig. 8.

Fig. 10 shows the relation between the beam waist position  $d$  and the width  $w$  of the laser beam emitted from the lens part of the laser beam source shown in Fig. 9.

Fig. 11 is a graph showing the results of measurement of the relation between the beam waist position  $d$  and the laser beam width  $w$  shown in Fig. 10.

Fig. 12 is a diagrammatic view showing the structure of an optical head used in a prior art optical recording and reproducing apparatus.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the optical head according to the present invention will now be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1 diagrammatically show the structure of a first embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention. In Fig. 1, like reference numerals are used to designate like parts appearing in Fig. 12.

Referring to Fig. 1, a motor 17a, which rotates an optical disk 1, is fixedly connected by a rotary shaft 17b to the optical disk 1. A recording medium is deposited by evaporation on the surface of the substrate of the optical disk 1 so as to provide a recording and reproducing surface 18 forming a

plurality of tracks. A fixed optical part 2 includes a laser 6, a collimation lens 7, a polarized beam splitter 8, a quarter wave plate 9, a cylindrical lens 10, and a photo detector 11. A moving optical part 19 for focusing a collimated laser beam 3 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 thereby recording and reproducing a signal on and from the optical disk 1 includes a rectangular prism 20 reflecting the collimated laser beam 3 in a substantially perpendicular direction, an objective lens 21, a slider 22 flying to float the objective lens 21 together with the rectangular prism 20 relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 through a gaseous layer, and an annular piezoelectric element 23 of a material such as a PZT ceramics for causing vertical movement of the objective lens 21 relative to the flying position of the slider 22. In Fig. 1, a flexure, as shown at 24 in Figs. 3A and 3B, for feeding the moving optical part 19 in the radial direction of the optical disk 1 and also for attaining the tracking control of the optical head is not shown for the simplicity of illustration.

The operation of the optical head having the illustrated structure will now be described in detail.

The optical head is divided into the fixed optical part 2 and the moving optical part 19, and the moving optical part 19 is moved in the radial direction of the optical disk 1 rotating at a high speed so as to seek a desired track. The collimated laser beam 3 obtained by collimating the laser beam emitted from the laser 6 by the collimation lens 7 is reflected by the rectangular prism 20 and focused by the objective lens 21 to be incident in a substantially perpendicular relation on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. The reflected laser beam from the optical disk 1 is substantially totally reflected by the polarized beam splitter 8 after passing through the quarter wave plate 9 and is then incident on the photo detector 11 through the known cylindrical lens 10. By means of the astigmatic function of the cylindrical lens 10, the photo detector 11 detects a focusing error signal. Also, the photo detector 11 detects a tracking error signal according to the far-field push-pull method.

The slider 22 flies relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 through the gaseous layer, and the flying height of the slider 22 is determined by the factors including the linear velocity of the optical disk 1, the shape of the slider 22 itself and the mass of the moving optical part 19. Accordingly, the flying height of the slider 22 differs depending on the positions corresponding to the radially inner  $r$  and outer peripheral areas of the optical disk 1, and, as a result, the objective lens 21 is caused to produce out-of-focus on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the

optical disk 1.

Suppose, for example, that the rotation speed of the optical disk 1 is 1,800 rpm, the weight of the moving optical part 19 is about 1 gram, and the surface area of the slider 22 is about 1 cm<sup>2</sup>. In this case, the flying height of the slider 22 ranges between several  $\mu\text{m}$  and 10  $\mu\text{m}$ , and there occurs a difference of several  $\mu\text{m}$  in the flying height of the slider 22 between the positions facing the radially innermost and outermost peripheral portions of the optical disk 1.

For the purpose of correcting the out-of-focus of the objective lens 21, the focusing error signal detected by the photo detector 11 is applied after amplification to the annular piezoelectric element 23 to cause a thickness change of the piezoelectric element 23, so that the laser beam can be just focused by the objective lens 21 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1.

The flying height of the slider 22 relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 is very small. Therefore, the working distance WD of the objective lens 21 can be greatly shortened, and the size of the objective lens 21 can also be reduced to have an allowable minimum value.

The slider 22 flies along the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1, and the optical axis of the objective lens 21 now makes substantially right angles with respect to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. Thus, the objective lens 21 is hardly adversely affected by tilting of the optical disk 1, and the numerical aperture NA of the objective lens 21 can be increased.

Especially, when the flying height of the slider 22 is selected to be only about 1  $\mu\text{m}$ , the fluctuation of the flying height is limited to less than a value between 1/10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 1/20  $\mu\text{m}$ , so that very slight focus adjustment suffices.

Generally, a piezoelectric ceramic material represented by a PZT ceramics shows a thickness change of the order of  $10^{-2}$  when a voltage is applied across the piezoelectric ceramic material. Therefore, with a small-sized piezoelectric element having a thickness of about 0.1 mm can easily give rise to a thickness change of 1  $\mu\text{m}$ .

The allowable focal depth  $\Delta$  of the objective lens 21 is given by  $\Delta = \lambda/2(\text{NA})^2$ , when the objective lens 21 is apart from the optical disk 1 by a distance so that 80% or more of the peak intensity of the focused laser beam may be maintained. When, for example,  $\lambda = 780 \text{ nm}$  and  $\text{NA} = 0.8$ , the allowable focus depth  $\Delta$  is given by  $\Delta = 0.6 \mu\text{m}$ . Thus, the required focusing control gain is lower by about 25 dB than the prior art gain lying between 50 dB and 60 dB.

the compensation of the flying height of the

slider 22 is achieved by moving the objective lens 21. Because the collimated laser beam 3 directed from the fixed optical part 2 to be incident on the objective lens 21 in the moving optical part 19 is a substantially completely parallel beam, the collimated beam 3 can be focused into a satisfactorily focused beam spot by the objective lens 21. Also, because there is little variation in the angle of the reflected beam, the focusing error signal detected by the photo detector 11 is substantially offsetless.

Figs. 2A, 2B and 2C illustrate the focusing correcting operation of the optical head shown in Fig. 1. That is, Figs. 2a, 2B and 2C represent the cases where the slider 22 is in an over-flying state, in an appropriate flying state and in an under-flying state, respectively.

In Figs. 2A, 2B and 2C, the flying heights  $h_1$ ,  $h_2$  and  $h_3$  of the surface of the slider 22 (the surface which is opposite to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 and which corresponds to that of a skiing part 27 shown in Figs. 3A and 3B) from the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 have a relation  $h_1 > h_2 > h_3$ , as shown. Therefore, the thickness of the piezoelectric element 23 may be changed in the order of  $t_1$ ,  $t_2$  and  $t_3$  ( $t_1 < t_2 < t_3$ ) so that the working distance H of the objective lens 21 is kept constant. By so selecting the thickness of the piezoelectric element 23, the laser beam is just focused by the objective lens 21.

The fluctuation of the flying height of the slider 22 is only about several  $\mu\text{m}$  at the maximum, and this value can be easily controlled by the piezoelectric element 23. On the other hand, in the case of a prior art optical head of non-flying type, it is necessary to compensate a distance of fluctuation of about 100  $\mu\text{m}$  caused by vertical runout of an optical disk. However, it is very difficult to attain this purpose with a small-sized piezoelectric element.

It will be seen from the above description of the first embodiment of the optical head that the moving optical part 19 flies relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 through the gaseous layer, so that the amount of de-focusing of the objective lens 21 with respect to the recording and reproducing surface 18 can be reduced to about one-several tenth of the prior art value. Also, by finely moving the objective lens 21 relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 thereby compensating the fluctuation of the flying height of the slider 22, the optical head having the small-sized and light-weight moving optical part 19 can fully satisfactorily focus the laser beam and detect the servo error signal.

Figs. 3A and 3B show the structure of a second embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention. In Figs. 3A and 3B, the same

reference numerals are used to designate the same parts appearing in Fig. 1. Referring to Figs. 3A and 3B, the optical head includes a flexure or lever 24 for fixing the moving optical part 19 to a linear motor 25 which acts to move the moving optical part 19 in the radial direction of the optical disk 1 so as to seek a track on the optical disk 1, a pair of piezoelectric elements 26 bonded to both surfaces respectively of the flexure 24, and a skiing part 27 of the slider 22.

The operation of the optical head having the structure shown in Figs. 3A and 3B will now be described. The collimated laser beam 3 directed from the fixed optical part 2 is reflected by the rectangular prism 20 in the moving optical part 19, and the reflected beam is focused in substantially perpendicular relation by the objective lens 21 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1.

By the function of the skiing part 27, the slider 22 flies, relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1, up to a height which is determined by the rotation speed of the optical disk 1. In response to a focusing error signal applied to the piezoelectric elements 26 bonded to the front and back surfaces respectively of the flexure 24, the two piezoelectric elements 26 expand and contract respectively thereby bending and deforming the flexure 24 in a direction substantially perpendicular with respect to the optical disk 1, thereby causing the corresponding movement of the moving optical part 19. As a result, the difference between the amounts of the flying height of the slider 22 due to the difference between the linear velocities at the radially inner and outer peripheral edges of the optical disk 1 can be compensated. The displacement of the objective lens 21 can be amplified by the combination of the push-pull deformations of the piezoelectric elements 26 bonded to the front and back surfaces respectively of the flexure 24 and the lever action of the flexure 24. Therefore, even when the flying height of the slider 22 is relatively large, and the fluctuation of the flying height is also relatively large, the undesirable fluctuation of the flying height can be easily compensated by the piezoelectric elements 26 of a small size.

It will be seen from the above description of the second embodiment of the optical head that undesirable fluctuation of the flying height of the slider 22 flying the moving optical part 19 relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 through the gaseous layer can be easily compensated by the small-sized piezoelectric elements 26 bonded to the front and back surfaces respectively of the flexure 24 fixing the moving optical part 19 to the linear motor 25. Further, the moving optical part 19 not provided

with any especial built-in actuator element can be made small in size. Further, as in the case of the first embodiment of the optical head, the collimated laser beam 3 maintained in the form of a parallel beam can be readily focused by the objective lens 21 into a satisfactorily focused beam spot, so that a servo error signal with little offset can be obtained.

Fig. 4 shows the structure of a third embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention. In Fig. 4, the same reference numerals are used to designate the same parts appearing in Fig. 1. Referring to Fig. 4, the optical head includes, in its fixed optical part 2, an annular piezoelectric element 28, and a fixture 29 for fixing the piezoelectric element 28, relative to the collimation lens 7.

The slider 22 acts to fly the moving optical part 19 relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 through the gaseous layer. The flying height of the slider 22 differs depending on the positions facing the radially inner and outer peripheral portions of the optical disk 1 rotating at a high speed, and a change of the flying height of the slider 22 is caused by a difference in peripheral speeds of these portions of the optical disk 1, with the result that the laser beam cannot be just focused by the objective lens 21 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. The photo detector 11 generates a focusing error signal representing an amount of out-of-focus, and this focusing error signal is applied, after having been subjected to voltage amplification, to the annular piezoelectric element 28 to change the thickness of the piezoelectric element 28 thereby shifting the collimation lens 7 in the direction of its optical axis. As a result of the axial shift of the collimation lens 7, the collimated laser beam 3 in the form of the parallel beam is diverged or converged, so that the beam spot formed by the objective lens 21 is maintained at the position where the laser beam is just focused. Therefore, in spite of any fluctuation of the flying height of the slider 22, the laser beam can be always just focused by the objective lens 21 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1.

The moving distance of the collimation lens 7 is expressed as a product of the value of flying height fluctuation of the slider 22 and the longitudinal magnification of the optical system formed by the collimation lens 7 and the objective lens 21. Thus, the moving distance of the collimation lens 7 is only about several tens  $\mu\text{m}$  at the maximum. On the other hand, in the case of the prior art optical head, it is necessary to compensate an amount of vertical runout of the optical disk 1, which runout is as large as about 100  $\mu\text{m}$ , and, in order to compensate such large vertical runout of the optical disk 1, the required moving distance of the collima-



tion lens 7 becomes as large as about several hundreds  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Thus, because the collimation lens 7 in the third embodiment of the optical head is required to be shifted over a very slight distance as described above, the collimated laser beam 3 is in the form of a substantially parallel beam, and the objective lens 21 exhibits its satisfactory focusing performance, so that the parallel laser beam is reflected from the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 without any appreciable change between the angle of reflection and the angle of incidence. Therefore, a focusing error signal substantially free from any disturbance can be generated.

Especially, by making the moving optical part 19 fly relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1, the slider 22 is made to fly along the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1, and the optical axis of the objective lens 21 makes substantially right angles with the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1, so that the optical axis of the objective lens 21 can be maintained substantially perpendicular to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 in spite of the tilting movement of the optical disk 1. Therefore, the numerical aperture NA of the objective lens 21 can be increased.

It will be seen from the above description of the third embodiment of the optical head that fluctuation of the flying height of the moving optical part 19 can be easily compensated by actuating the collimation lens 7 in the fixed optical part 2, and any special actuator need not be incorporated in the moving optical part 19. Therefore, the optical head can be made small in size.

Fig. 5 shows the structure of a fourth embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention. In Fig. 5, the same reference numerals are used to designate the same parts appearing in Fig. 1. Referring to Fig. 5, the optical head includes an optical fiber 30 for transmitting the collimated laser beam 3 toward an objective lens 31 which is formed at the terminating end of the optical fiber 30, and an actuating element 32 in the form of a piezoelectric element of a material such as a PZT ceramics for causing vertical movement of the objective lens 31 relative to the surface of the slider 22.

The operation of the optical head having the structure shown in Fig. 5 will now be described. The collimated laser beam 3 obtained by collimating the laser beam emitted from the laser 6 by the collimation lens 7 is transmitted through the optical fiber 30 to reach the objective lens 31 and is focused by the objective lens 31 substantially perpendicularly onto the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. As described

above, the objective lens 31 is provided at the terminating end of the optical fiber 30. The reflected laser beam from the optical disk 1 is substantially totally reflected by the polarized beam splitter 8 after passing through the quarter wave plate 9 and is then incident on the photo detector 11 through the cylindrical lens 10. The piezoelectric element 32 actuates both the objective lens 31 and the optical fiber 30 in response to the application of a focusing error signal from the photo detector 11, thereby compensating any fluctuation of the flying height of the slider 22. The optical fiber 30, which is light in weight and flexible, can be freely actuated by the piezoelectric element 32.

Because the flying height of the slider 22 from the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 is very small, the working distance WD of the objective lens 31 can be greatly shortened, and its size can also be reduced to have an allowable minimum value.

Figs. 6A and 6B show two types of objective lens 31 used in the optical head shown in Fig. 5. More precisely, Fig. 6A shows that the objective lens 31 is provided at the terminating end of a self-focusing type fiber 33, while Fig. 6B shows that the objective lens 31 is provided at the terminating end of a clad-type optical fiber 34.

Referring to Fig. 6A, the self-focusing type optical fiber 33 is used as the optical fiber 30, and the lens function of its terminating end is utilized to focus the collimated laser beam 3 onto the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. That is, the self-focusing type optical fiber 33 is provided with a square refractive index distribution in its radial direction and operates to transmit the incident collimated laser beam 3, while maintaining the phase condition of the collimated beam 3. Therefore, when the terminating end face of the optical fiber 33 is suitably cut, the collimated laser beam 3 emanating from the terminating end of the optical fiber 33 can be focused onto a beam spot.

Referring to Fig. 6B, the clad-type optical fiber 34 is used as the optical fiber 30, and its terminating end is spherically shaped to form a microlens for focusing the collimated laser beam 3 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1.

It will be seen from the above description of the fourth embodiment of the optical head that the collimated laser beam is transmitted through the optical fiber to the beam focusing means mounted on the slider which flies facing the recording and reproducing surface of the optical disk. This structure makes it possible to decrease the number of optical parts constituting the optical head, and the use of the optical fiber, which is light in weight and flexible, increases the degree of freedom of designing the structure of the optical head and can re-

duct the size and weight of the optical head.

Fig. 7 shows the structure of a fifth embodiment of the optical head according to the present invention. In Fig. 7, the same reference numerals are used to designate the same parts appearing in Fig. 5. Referring to Fig. 7, the optical head includes an actuating element such as a piezoelectric element 35 for shifting the collimation lens 7 in the direction of its optical axis, and a fixture 36 fixing the actuating element 35 relative to the collimation lens 7.

The collimated laser beam 3 emanating from the fixed optical part 2 is transmitted through the optical fiber 30 to reach the objective lens 31 and is focused by the objective lens 31 substantially perpendicularly onto the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. The slider 22 flies up to a flying height determined by the peripheral speed of the rotating optical disk 1. In order to compensate a change of the flying height of the slider 22 caused by the difference in peripheral speed between the radially inner and outer peripheral portions of the optical disk 1, the actuating element 35 operates to shift the collimation lens 7 in the direction of the optical axis. That is, a focusing error signal generated from the photo detector 11 is applied to the actuating element 35, and the collimation lens 7 changes the angle of incidence of the collimated laser beam 3 incident on the optical fiber 30 until the laser beam is just focused by the objective lens 31 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. As a result, the change of the flying height of the slider 22 caused by the difference in peripheral speed between the radially inner and outer peripheral portions of the rotating optical disk 1 can be compensated.

The moving distance of the collimation lens 7 is expressed as the product of the value of flying height fluctuation of the slider 22 and the longitudinal magnification of the optical system including the collimation lens 7 and the objective lens 31. Thus, the moving distance of the collimation lens 7 is only about several tens  $\mu\text{m}$  at the maximum. On the other hand, in the case of the prior art optical head, it is necessary to compensate an actual amount of vertical runout of the optical disk 1, which runout is as large as about 100  $\mu\text{m}$ , and, in order to compensate such large vertical runout of the optical disk 1, the required moving distance of the collimation lens 7 becomes as large as several hundreds  $\mu\text{m}$ , with the result that the size of the actuating element 35 becomes inevitably large.

Thus, because the collimation lens 7 in the fifth embodiment of the optical head is required to move over a very slight distance as described above, the collimated laser beam 3 is in the form of a substantially parallel beam, and any substantial

change will not occur in the quantity of the laser beam incident on and transmitted by the optical fiber 30. Further, a focusing error signal substantially free from disturbance is obtained because the objective lens 31 can satisfactorily focus the laser beam and any appreciable change occurs in the angle of reflection of the reflected parallel beam. Suppose, for example, that the flying height of the slider 22 is about 1  $\mu\text{m}$ . In this case, deviation of the collimated laser beam 3 from the true parallel beam is negligible because it can be compensated by focus adjustment of only about 1  $\mu\text{m}$ . Therefore, an adverse effect of the beam deviation on both the beam focusing performance and the operation of detecting a servo error signal can be substantially neglected.

It will be seen from the above description of the fifth embodiment of the optical head that a fluctuation of the flying height of the slider 22 flying to float the moving optical part 19 relative to the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 through the gaseous layer can be easily compensated by actuating the collimation lens 7 by the actuating element 35 of small size. Because any especial actuator need not be provided in the moving optical part 19, the optical head can be made small in size.

Fig. 8 shows the structure of a sixth embodiment of the optical recording and reproducing apparatus according to the present invention.

In Fig. 8, the same reference numerals are used to designate the same parts appearing in Fig. 1. Referring to Fig. 8, the information recording and reproducing apparatus includes a laser diode 37 of the type having a variable beam emission point and emitting a laser beam 38.

Fig. 9 shows one form of the laser diode 37 preferably used in the apparatus shown in Fig. 8. Referring to Fig. 9, the laser diode 37 includes a laser oscillation part 39, a lens part 40, and electrodes 41, 42 and 43.

A laser diode described in Extended Abstracts (The 35th Spring Meeting, 1988: The Japan Applied Physics and Related Societies) No. 3, p. 863, Lecture No. 29a-ZP-7, under the title "Beam Waist Position Variable Diode Laser Integrated With Carrier Injection Type Lens", can be used as this laser diode 37. Referring to Fig. 9, the laser oscillation part 39 of the laser diode 37 oscillates to emit the laser beam 38 when a current  $I_3$  is injected from the electrode 43. When currents  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  are supplied to the respective electrodes 41 and 42 of the lens part 40 while the laser oscillation part 39 is oscillating, a change occurs in refractive index between the electrodes 41 and 42 of the lens part 40, thereby changing the position of the beam waist, that is, the emission point of the laser beam 38.

The operation of the optical recording and re-

producing apparatus having the structure shown in Fig. 8 will now be described in detail.

The laser beam 38 emitted from the laser diode 37 is collimated by the collimation lens 7. After being reflected by the rectangular prism 20, the collimated laser beam 3 is focused substantially perpendicularly onto the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 by the objective lens 21 mounted on the slider 22 and floating facing the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. The reflected laser beam from the optical disk 1 is substantially subjected to total reflection by the polarized beam splitter 8 after passing through the quarter wave plate 9, and the reflected laser beam from the polarized beam splitter 8 is incident through the cylindrical lens 10 onto the photo detector 11. The photo detector 11 detects a focusing error signal by the astigmatic function of the cylindrical lens 10 and also detects a tracking error signal by the far-field push-pull method.

The flying height of the slider 22 differs between the positions facing the radially inner and outer peripheral portions of the rotating optical disk 1, with the result that the laser beam cannot be just focused on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1. In order to correct the out-of-focus of the objective lens 21, the currents  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  generated on the basis of the focusing error signal detected by the photo detector 11 are respectively supplied to the electrodes 41 and 42 of the lens part 40 of the laser diode 37. As a result, the beam waist position of the laser beam 38 emitted from the laser diode 37 is shifted in the direction of the optical axis, thereby causing the wave front of the collimated laser beam 3 produced by the collimation lens 7 to diverge or converge, so that the collimated laser beam 3 can be just focused by the objective lens 21 onto the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1.

Fig. 10 shows the relation between the beam waist position  $d$  and the width  $w$  of the laser beam 38 at the lens part 40 of the laser diode 37. Fig. 11 is a graph showing the results of measurement of the beam waist position  $d$  and the beam width  $w$  shown in Fig. 10. Referring to Figs. 9, 10 and 11, the laser diode 37 is formed by integrating the lens part 40 with the laser oscillation part 39, and the beam waist position  $d$  of the emitted laser beam 38 varies as the values of the currents  $I_1$  and  $I_2$ , which are made to flow into the lens part 40, are changed. For example, when the laser oscillation part 39 is made to oscillate by supplying the current  $I_3 = 370$  mA to the electrode 43, and the values of the currents  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  supplied respectively to the electrodes 41 and 42 of the lens part 40 are changed from  $I_1 = I_2 = 20$  mA, shown by the solid curve A, to  $I_1 = 130$  mA and  $I_2 = 175$

mA, shown by the broken curve B in Fig. 11, the beam waist position  $d$  is shifted from the distance of 45  $\mu$ m to the distance of 55  $\mu$ m, that is, the beam waist position  $d$  is shifted inwardly (rightward) by about 10  $\mu$ m, while the width  $w$  of the beam waist is maintained substantially constant.

The amount of out-of-focus that can be corrected by using the laser diode 37 shown in Fig. 9 is from 1  $\mu$ m to 2  $\mu$ m. This is because the amount of out-of-focus is expressed by a value obtained by dividing the shift distance of the beam emitting position by the longitudinal magnification (generally in the range from 5 to 10) of the focusing optical system formed by the combination of the collimation lens 7 and the objective lens 21. Thus, the amount of out-of-focus described above can be corrected by using the laser diode 37 shown in Fig. 9.

On the other hand, in the case of the prior art optical recording and reproducing apparatus shown in Fig. 12, the vertical runout of the optical disk 1 amounting to about several hundreds  $\mu$ m must be compensated. Therefore, the objective lens 14 cannot just focus the laser beam, because the emission point shift distance of only 1  $\mu$ m to 2  $\mu$ m, which is given by the laser diode 37 used in the present invention, is not sufficient for focusing the laser beam.

Thus, in accordance with the present invention, without the prior art requirement for provision of a mechanical actuator, the amount of out-of-focus is corrected by controlling the currents supplied to the lens part 40 of the laser diode 37, and the laser beam can be just focused by the objective lens 21 on the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1.

It will be seen from the above description of the embodiment of the optical recording and reproducing apparatus that the amount of out-of-focus of the objective lens 21 mounted on the slider 22 flying facing the recording and reproducing surface 18 of the optical disk 1 can be corrected by making variable the beam emission position of the laser beam source 37. Therefore, the optical head which does not include any moving elements and includes only a small number of parts and which is light in weight and small in size can be advantageously used in the optical recording and reproducing apparatus, so that the apparatus can operate with a short access time.

Further, because the optical head can be made very small in size and light in weight, an optical disk of a stacked structure formed by a plurality of stacked recording and reproducing surfaces similar to a magnetic disk of a stacked structure can be obtained, so that the memory capacity can be greatly increased.

In the aforementioned embodiments, reference has been made to the optical disk 1 having the recording and reproducing surface 18 formed by evaporating a recording medium on the surface of the disk substrate, by way of example. It is apparent however that an oxidation preventive layer or a protective layer for preventing a damage to the optical disk 1 due to collision with the slider 22 may additionally be formed on the recording medium.

Also, when the thickness of the disk substrate is suitably selected in consideration of the relation between the thickness precision or tilt of the disk substrate and the aberration of the numerical aperture NA of the objective lens, the present invention can also be applied to a conventional optical disk in which a signal is recorded and reproduced on and from a recording medium by directing a light beam from the side of the disk substrate.

Further, in the aforementioned embodiments, the fixed optical part 2 includes the beam splitter 8 and the quarter wave plate 9 disposed in the path of the laser beam from the laser 6 toward the collimation lens 7. However, the fixed optical part 2 may be constructed so that the collimation lens 7 is disposed immediately before the laser 6, and the collimated laser beam 3 is transmitted through the beam splitter 8 and the quarter wave plate 9.

The aforementioned embodiments have merely referred to a minimum number of necessary constitutional elements which are required for explaining the present invention. Therefore, it is apparent that any other known means such as servo means, modulation and demodulation signal processing means and an error correction circuit required for constituting an optical disk driver may be used as required.

## Claims

1. An optical head comprising:  
a source (6) of a laser beam;  
beam condensing means (7) including a collimation lens for collimating the laser beam emitted from said laser beam source (6);  
beam reflecting means (20) for reflecting the collimated laser beam so as to direct the collimated laser beam in a direction substantially perpendicular to a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1);  
an objective lens (21) for focusing the laser beam reflected from said beam reflecting means (20) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);  
beam splitting means (8, 9) for splitting the reflected laser beam from said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);

beam detecting means (11) for receiving and detecting the reflected laser beam split by said beam splitting means (8, 9);  
a fixed optical part (2) including said laser beam source and said beam condensing means (7) therein;  
an actuating element (23) for causing a slight movement of said objective lens (21) fixed to said actuating element (23) in the direction of the optical axis of said objective lens (21); and  
a slider (22) mounting thereon said beam reflecting means (20), said actuating element (23) and said objective lens (21), said slider flying to float said objective lens (21) relative to said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1) through a gaseous layer, and said objective lens (21) mounted on said flying slider (22) being actuated by said actuating element (23) until the laser beam is just focused by said objective lens (21) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1).  
2. An optical head according to Claim 1, wherein said actuating element is an annular piezoelectric element (23).  
3. An optical head comprising:  
a source (6) of a laser beam;  
beam condensing means (7) including a collimation lens for collimating the laser beam emitted from said laser beam source (6);  
beam reflecting means (20) for reflecting the collimated laser beam so as to direct the collimated laser beam in a direction substantially perpendicular to a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1);  
an objective lens (21) for focusing the laser beam reflected from said beam reflecting means (20) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);  
beam splitting means (8, 9) for splitting the reflected laser beam from said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);  
beam detecting means (11) for receiving and detecting the reflected laser beam split by said beam splitting means (8, 9);  
a fixed optical part (2) including said laser beam source (6) and said beam condensing means (7) therein;  
an actuating element (23) having said collimation lens mounted thereon;  
a slider (22) mounting said objective lens (21) and said beam reflecting means (20) thereon, said slider flying to float said objective lens (21) relative to said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1) through a gaseous layer, and said collimation lens being driven in the direction of its optical axis until the laser beam is just focused by said objective lens (21) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said op-

tical disk (1).

4. An optical head according to Claim 3, wherein said actuating element is an annular piezoelectric element (28).

5.-An optical head comprising:

a source (6) of a laser beam;

beam condensing means (7) including a collimation lens for collimating the laser beam emitted from said laser beam source (6);

beam reflecting means (20) for reflecting the collimated laser beam so as to direct the collimated laser beam in a direction substantially perpendicular to a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1);

an objective lens (21) for focusing the laser beam reflected from said beam reflecting means (20) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);

beam splitting means (8, 9) for splitting the reflected laser beam from said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);

beam detecting means (11) for receiving and detecting the reflected laser beam split by said beam splitting means (8, 9);

a fixed optical part (2) including said laser beam source (6) and said beam condensing means (7) therein;

movable optical means (19) including a slider (22) mounting said objective lens (21) and said beam reflecting means (20) thereon;

feeding means (25) for feeding said movable optical means (19) in a radial direction of said optical disk (1);

a flexure (24) for fixing said movable optical means (19) to said feeding means (25); and

an actuating element (26) for bending said flexure (24);

said slider (22) flying to float said objective lens (21) relative to said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1) through a gaseous layer, and said actuating element (26) causing said flexure (24) to bend, thereby moving said objective lens (21) mounted on said flying slider (22) in the direction of its optical axis until the laser beam is just focused on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1).

6. An optical head according to Claim 5, wherein said actuating element (26) comprises a pair of piezoelectric elements bonded to the front and back surfaces respectively of said flexure (24), and said piezoelectric elements are energized differentially to cause bending of said flexure (24), thereby moving said objective lens (21) in the direction of its optical axis.

7. An optical head comprising:

a source (6) of a laser beam;

beam condensing means (7) including a collimation

lens for collimating the laser beam emitted from said laser beam source (6);

beam focusing means (31) for focusing the collimated laser beam on a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1);

beam splitting means (8, 9) for splitting the reflected laser beam from said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1);

beam detecting means (11) for receiving and detecting the reflected laser beam split by said beam splitting means (8, 9);

an optical fiber (30) for transmitting the collimated laser beam toward said beam focusing means (31); and

a slider (22) mounting said optical fiber (30) and said beam focusing means (31) thereon, said slider (22) flying to float said beam focusing means (31) relative to said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1) through a gaseous layer, whereby a signal is recorded and reproduced on and from said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1) by the laser beam focused thereon by said beam focusing means (31).

8. An optical head according to Claim 7, further comprising an actuating element (32) for moving said beam focusing means (31) together with a terminating end of said optical fiber (30) in the direction of the optical axis of said beam focusing means (31), said actuating element (32) driving said beam focusing means (31) until the laser beam is just focused by said beam focusing means (31) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1).

9. An optical head according to Claim 8, wherein said actuating element (32) is a piezoelectric element.

10. An optical head according to Claim 7, further comprising an actuating element (35) mounting said collimation lens in said beam condensing means (7), said actuating element (35) driving said collimation lens in the direction of its optical axis until the laser beam is just focused by said beam focusing means (31) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1).

11. An optical head according to Claim 10, wherein said actuating element (35) is a piezoelectric element.

12. An optical head according to Claim 7, wherein a terminating end of said optical fiber (30) has been worked to have a spherical surface to act as said beam focusing means (31).

13. An optical head according to Claim 7 wherein said optical fiber (30) is a self-focusing type optical fiber (33).

14. An optical head according to Claim 13, wherein the lens function of said self-focusing type optical fiber (33) is utilized to be substituted for said beam

focusing means (31).

15. An optical information recording and reproducing apparatus comprising:

a source (37) of a laser beam;

means (40) for changing the position of the beam emission point of said laser beam source (37); 5

beam condensing means (7) including a collimation lens for collimating the laser beam emitted from said laser beam source (37);

beam focusing means (21) for focusing the collimated laser beam on a signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of an optical disk (1); 10

beam splitting means (8, 9) for splitting the reflected laser beam from said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1); 15

beam detecting means (11) for receiving and detecting the reflected laser beam split by said beam splitting means (8, 9); and

a slider (22) mounting said beam focusing means (21) thereon, said slider (22) flying to float said beam focusing means (21) relative to said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1) through a gaseous layer; 20

said beam emission point position changing means (40) changing the position of the beam emission point of said laser beam source (37) until the laser beam is just focused by said beam focusing means (21) on said signal recording and reproducing surface (18) of said optical disk (1). 25

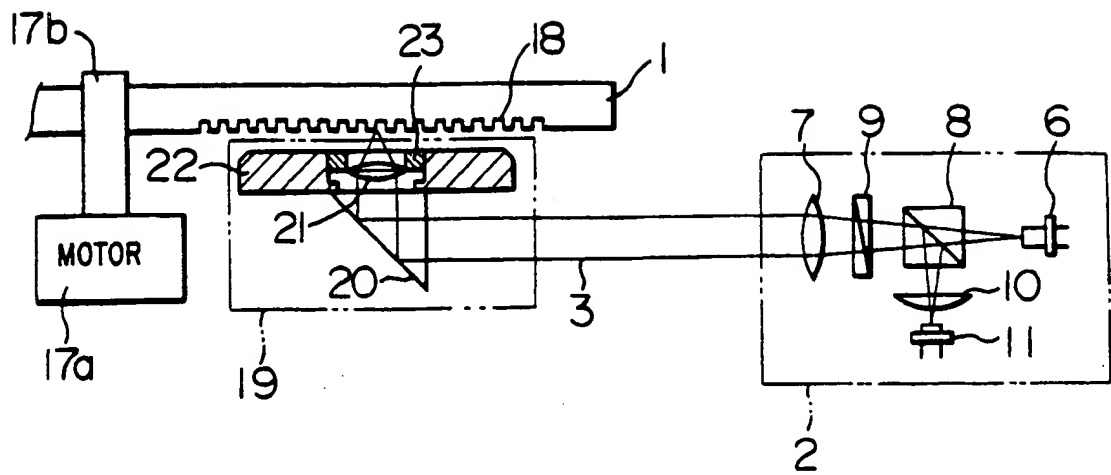
16. An optical information recording and reproducing apparatus according to Claim 15, wherein said beam emission point position changing means is a lens part (40) integrated with a laser oscillation part (39) to form a laser diode (37), and said lens part (40) acts to change the beam waist position (d) of the emitted laser beam. 30 35

17. An optical information recording and reproducing apparatus according to Claim 15, wherein said optical disk (1) has recording tracks, a signal recording layer and a protective layer for protecting said signal recording layer formed on a surface of a disk substrate, and an information signal is recorded and reproduced on and from said signal recording layer of said optical disk (1). 40 45

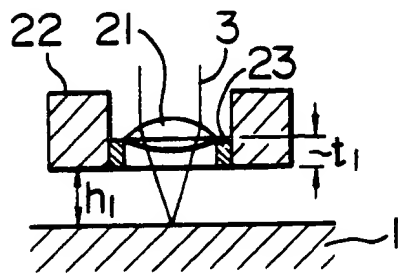
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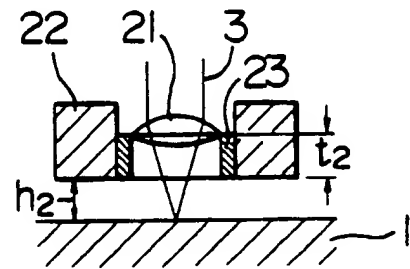
F I G. 1



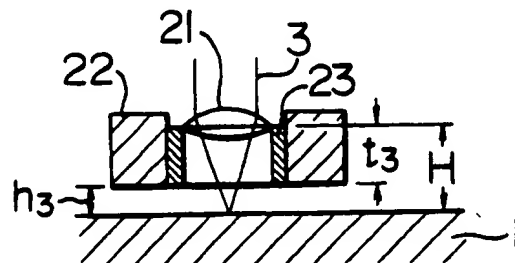
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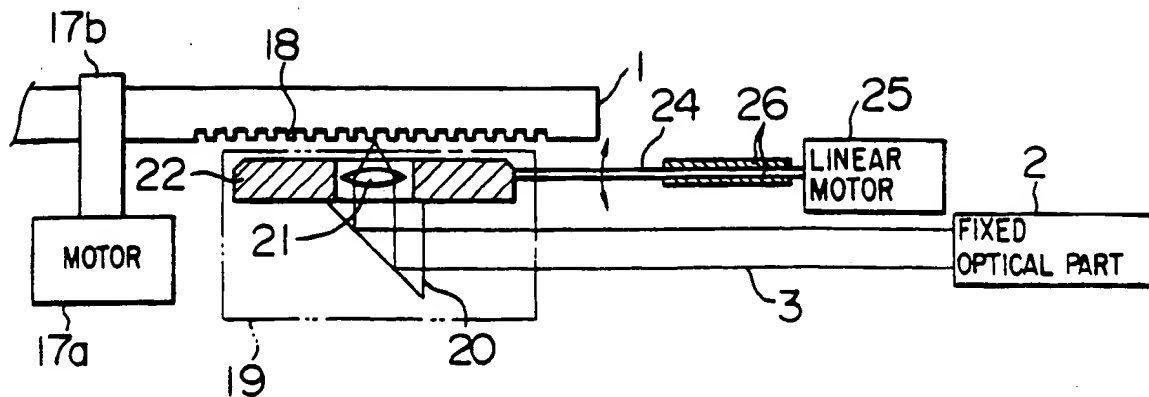
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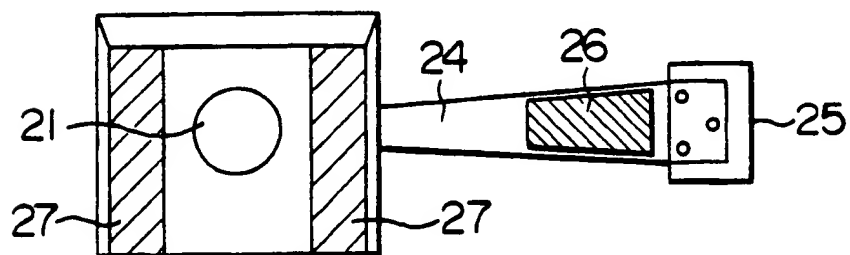
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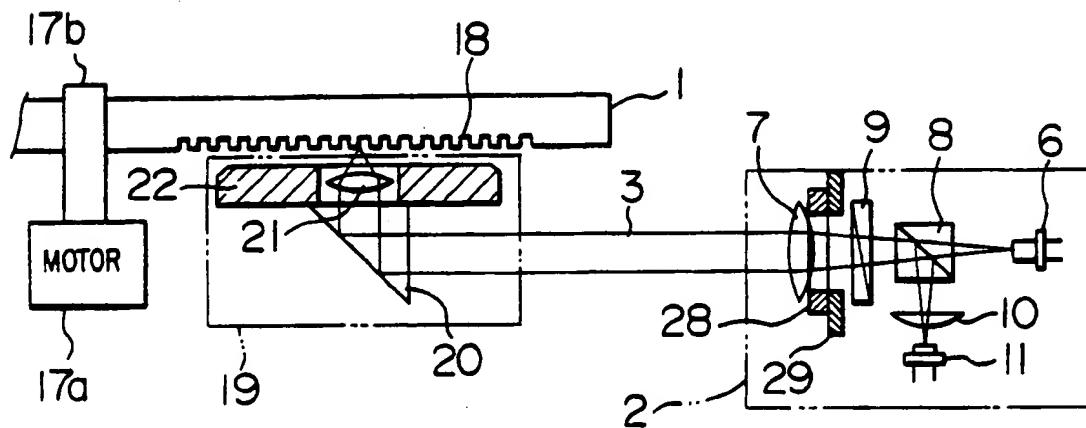
F I G. 3A



F I G. 3B

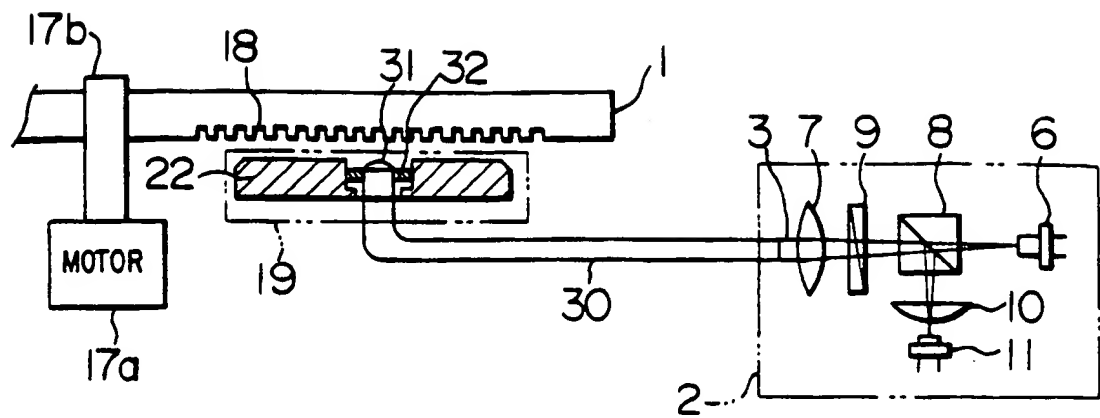


F I G. 4

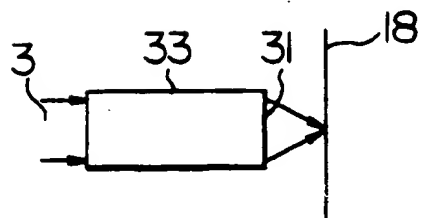




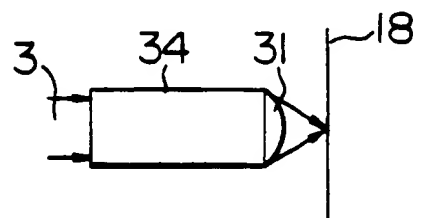
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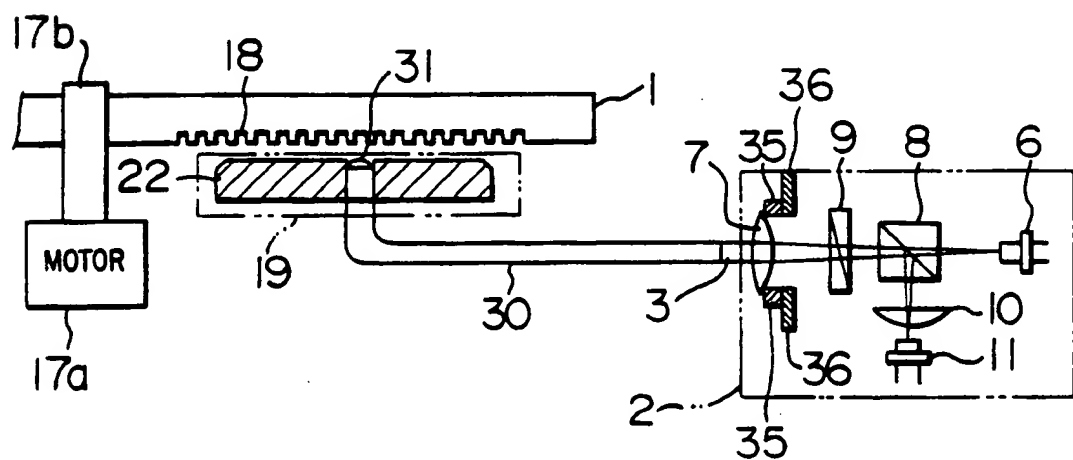
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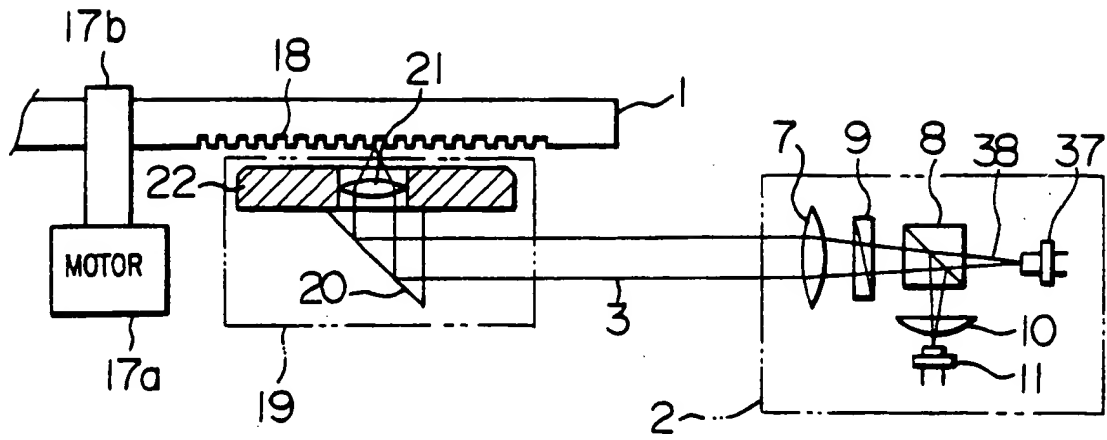
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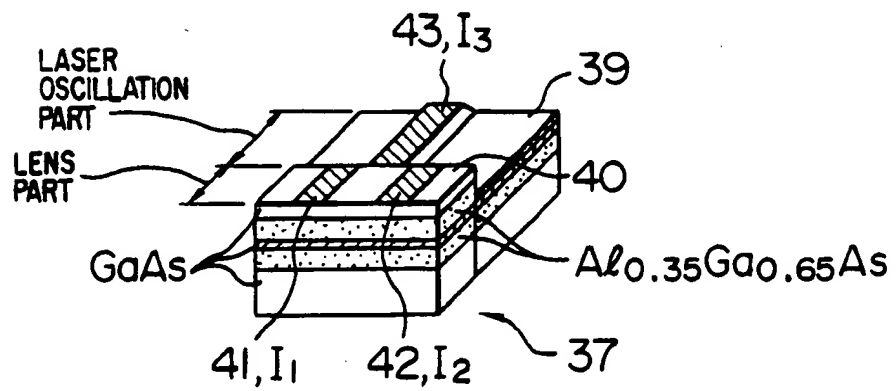
F I G. 7



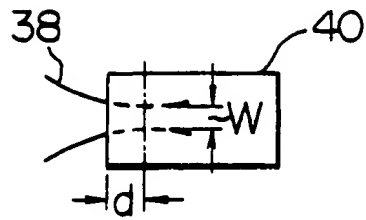
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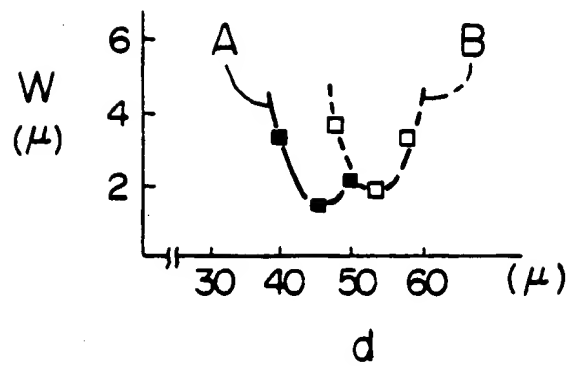
F I G. 9



F I G. 10



F I G. 11



F I G. 12  
PRIOR ART

